

What is claimed is:

1. In a radio communication system having a mobile node selectably operable to communicate data with a selected network of a first group of first networks, the first networks of the first group of networks operable pursuant to a first communication scheme, and the radio communication system further having a second group of second networks, the second networks operable pursuant to at least a second communication scheme, an improvement of apparatus for facilitating selection of the selected network through which to effectuate communication of the data, said apparatus comprising:

a second-network detector embodied at the mobile node and adapted to receive indications of second-network signals broadcast by at least selected ones of the second networks, the second-network signals containing second-network indicia identifying geographic positioning of the second networks, respectively, from which the second-network signals are broadcast, said second-network detector for detecting values of the second network indicia contained in thee second-network signals, detection of the second-network indicia indicative also of the geographic positioning of the mobile node;

a first-network detector also embodied at the mobile node, said first-network detector adapted to receive indications of first-network signals broadcast by at least selected ones of the first networks, the first-network signals containing first-network identifying indicia identifying the first networks, respectively, from which the first-network signals are broadcast, said first-network detector selectably for detecting values of the first-network identifying indicia, detection of the first-network identifying indicia indicative also of which of the first-networks are potentially available through which to communicate; and

a selector adapted to receive indications of detections made by said first-network detector and indications of detections made by said second-network detector, said selector for selecting, responsive thereto, the selected network through which to effectuate the communication of the data.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first networks of the first group each forms a wireless local area network, each identified by a service set identifier and wherein the first-network identifying indicia contained in the first-network signals detected by said first network detector comprise values of the service set identifiers.

3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the second networks of the second group of each forms a cellular-system network, wherein the second-network indicia contained in the second-network signals detected by said second network detector comprise country-code identifiers, identifying the geographic position in terms of country codes.

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4. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising at least a first list maintained at the mobile node, the first list identifying first networks of the first group with which the mobile node is permitted to communicate the data, selection made by said selector made, in part, responsive to entries contained in the at least the first list.

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5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the at least the first list comprises the first list and at least a second list, the first list identifying first networks of the first group associated with a first level of preference and the second list identifying first-networks of the first group associated with a second level of preference, said selector for selecting the selected network, if available, from the first list prior to selection of the selected network from the second list.

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6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the at least the first list comprises the first list, the second list, and at least a third list, said selector further for selecting the selected network from the second list, if available, prior to selection of the selected network from the third list.

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7. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the entries formed of the first networks of said at least the first list have indexed together therewith geographic identifiers that identify geographic areas associated with the first networks.

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8. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the selection made by said selector is made responsive to comparisons of the values of the second-network indicia detected by said second-network selector with the geographic identifiers indexed together with the entries of the at least the first list.

9. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the mobile node comprises a preferred second-network list, the preferred second-network list identifying second networks, the second network signals, of which the indications are detected by said second-network detector, are broadcast by second-networks listed on the preferred second network list.

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10. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the second networks are operated by network operators, wherein the first networks are operated by first network operators, and wherein selected ones of the operators of the second networks at least maintain associations with selected ones of the operators of the first networks, said selector further selectably for selecting the
10 selected network responsive to the at least the associations.

11. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein said selector further selects the selected network responsive to the at least associations when entries contained in the at least the first list fail to identify any first networks amenable to form the selected network.

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12. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the mobile node comprises a preferred second-network list, the preferred second-network list identifying second networks, ordered in terms of order of preference, and wherein said selector selects the selected network responsive to entries contained in the preferred second-network list and associations between operators of the entries
20 listed thereon and operators of first networks.

13. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein said selector selects the selected network responsive to a most-preferred, available entry listed at the preferred second-network list.

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14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said selector selects as the selected network a first network whose operator maintains an association with the most-preferred, available entry listed at the preferred second-network list.

15. A method for facilitating selection of a selected network through which to
30 effectuate communication of data in a radio communication system, the radio communication system having a mobile node selectably operable to communicate the data with a selected

network of a first group of first networks, the first networks of the first group of networks operable pursuant to a first communication scheme and the radio communication system further having a second group of second networks, the second networks operable pursuant to at least a second communication scheme, said method comprising the operations of:

- 5 detecting values of second-network indicia contained in the second-network signals broadcast by at least selected ones of the second networks, the second-network indicia identifying geographic positioning of the second networks from which the second-network signals are broadcast;
- detecting values of first-network identifying indicia contained in first-network
10 signals broadcast by at least selected ones of the first networks, the network identifying indicia identifying the first networks from which the first-network signals are broadcast; and
- selecting, responsive to the values detected during said operations of detecting, the selected network through which to effectuate the communication of the data.
- 15 16. The method of claim 15 further comprising the operation of forming at least a first list at the mobile node, the first list identifying first networks of the first group with which the mobile node is permitted to communicate, selection made during said operation of selecting responsive, in part, responsive to entries contained in the at least the first list.
- 20 17. The method of claim 16 wherein the entries formed of the first networks of the at least the first list formed during said operation of forming have indexed together therewith geographic identifiers that identify geographic areas associated with the first networks.
- 25 18. The method of claim 17 wherein selection made during said operation of selecting is made responsive to values of the second-network indicia detected during said operation of detecting the values of the second-network indicia with the geographic identifiers indexed together with the entries of the at least the first list.
- 30 19. The method of claim 17 wherein the second networks are operated by network operators, wherein the first networks are operated by first network operators, and wherein selected ones of the operators of the second networks at least maintain associations with selected

ones of the operators of the first networks, selection made during said operation of selecting further responsive to the at least the associations.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the mobile node maintains a preferred second-
5 network list, the preferred second-network list identifying second networks in terms of order of preference, and wherein selection made during said operation of selecting of the selected network is responsive to entries contained in the preferred second-network list and associations between operators of the entries listed thereon and operators of the first networks.